

Submission 336 (Angelica Aguilar, September 15, 2011)



CALIFORNIA
High-Speed Rail Authority

Merced to Fresno High-Speed Train Section
Draft Environmental Impact Report/
Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) –
Public Hearings
September 2011

Please submit your completed comment card at the
end of the meeting, or mail to:

Merced to Fresno HST Environmental Review, 770 L Street, Suite 800, Sacramento, CA 95814

The comment period on the Draft EIR/EIS begins
August 15, 2011 and ends September 28, 2011.
Comments received after **September 28, 2011** will
not be addressed in the Final EIR/EIS.

Tren de Alta Velocidad Sección Merced a Fresno
Anteproyecto del Informe de Impacto
Medioambiental/Declaración de Impacto
Medioambiental (EIR/EIS) - **Audiencias Públicas**
Septiembre 2011

Por favor entregue su tarjeta al final de la reunión, o
envíela a una de las siguientes direcciones:

El periodo a hacer comentarios empieza a 15 de
agosto y termina a 28 de septiembre. Comentarios
reciben después de **28 de septiembre** no se
responderá en el EIR/EIS final.

Name/
Nombre: Mrs. Angelica Aguilar

(Optional/Opcional) 675 Mainberry Drive
Address/Domicilio: Madera, CA 93637

City, State, Zip code/
Ciudad, estado, código postal:

Organization/
Organización: Community member w/
family in the Bay Area.

Phone Number/
Número de teléfono: (559) 675-7006

Email address/
Correo electrónico: Tank31_31@yahoo.com

336-1

Madera needs a stop here in Madera because
we are the center of CA, but also because of
the following reasons.

1) Yosemite is a tourist attraction.

2) Population has doubled and with a stop
here ^{the population would continue to} ~~it could~~ increase thereby profiting
the central valley.

3) Cuts down on traffic & pollution ^{in both} ~~direction~~

4) Gives bay area residents an opportunity
to relocate here and thereby commute to
work.

El periodo a hacer comentarios
está prolongado hasta del
13 de octubre de 2011

Comment Card
Tarjeta de Comentarios

336-1

City Council

Gilroy

#1 Yosemite as a tourist attraction.

Buses from the casinos, Chuckchansi, Table
Mountain could pick up bay area residents
~~and~~ ~~st~~ from the train high speed rail and
bring them to the casinos easily.

Currently bay area residents charter a bus
to and from the casinos. Hotels here in
Madera would ^{also} profit from Bay area tourists

#2 Housing could become a reality to
#4 bay area residents.

\$400,000 for a shack in the bay area
or \$200,000 for a dream home here in
Madera.

#3 If the train is truly environmentally
friendlier than a car, truck, ~~or~~ bus, or
train, ~~or~~ plane then we will be better off.

Lastly European visitors would also
benefit by having a stop here in Madera
and thereby visit Yosemite and then ref

Response to Submission 336 (Angelica Aguilar, September 15, 2011)

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See MF-Response-GENERAL-2.

Submission 429 (Angelica Aguilar, September 15, 2011)

25 MS. AGUILAR: Hi, my name is Angelica Aguilar,

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429-1

1 and I'm a community member with family in the Bay Area.
2 I recently relocated about five years ago to the
3 Bay Area -- from the Bay Area, and I have a different
4 stance. I have heard the concerns and comments with the
5 farmers, and I support everything that they say. I just
6 want to add on the feelings of the members in the
7 community of Madera. A few members that I've spoken with
8 agreed to some of the comments that I have.

9 The position that I'm stating today is that I
10 think we need to have a stop here in Madera. There's four
11 reasons I have listed. One, Yosemite is a tourist
12 attraction and it's here in Madera County. Two, the
13 population has doubled, and with a stop here the
14 population could continue to increase, thereby profiting
15 the Central Valley. No. 3, cuts down on traffic and
16 pollution in both directions here in the Valley as well as
17 in the Bay Area. And, No. 4, gives Bay Area residents an
18 opportunity to relocate here and thereby commute to work
19 instead.

20 I have more time. I want to further the four
21 points that I just listed. Yosemite is a tourist
22 attraction. Buses from the Bay Area come here constantly
23 to the casinos: Chukchansi, Table Mountain. They pick up
24 the Bay Area residents and they come here. I think if
25 they had a stop here, they might be more willing or more

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Submission 429 (Angelica Aguilar, September 15, 2011) - Continued

429-1

1 interested in taking the high-speed rail and having buses
2 from Chukchansi or Table Mountain here at the stop and
3 then continue up to their casinos. Also, hopefully there
4 could be taxis. Then in case some people decided that
5 they wanted to go and they hadn't originally planned to go
6 to the casinos, they could pick them up and continue on to
7 the casinos.

8 No. 2, housing could become a reality to a lot of
9 Bay Area residents. Currently houses are 400, 500,000,
10 built in 1940, basically conditions -- I hate to say this
11 word, but a shack. Two bedroom, one bath, termite damage,
12 pumps in the winter to take out the water that leaks
13 underneath the houses. Really bad condition. But people
14 buy them anyways, 400, 500,000 minimum. They could see
15 their dream of owning a house here in Madera for around
16 \$200,000 and have a dream home.

17 No. 3, if the train is truly environmentally
18 friendlier than a car, a truck, or a bus, train or a
19 plane, then we might be better off with having it.

20 Lastly, European visitors would also benefit by
21 having a stop here in Madera and thereby continuing on to
22 visit Yosemite which is what we have here in Madera which
23 is so great.

24 Thank you.

Response to Submission 429 (Angelica Aguilar, September 15, 2011)

429-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-2.

The commenter suggests the alternative of locating a station in Madera. This proposed alternative will not be included in the Final EIR/EIS because it would not substantially reduce any of the significant environmental impacts identified for the project. As such, it would not qualify as an alternative under CEQA (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6).

Submission 349 (Naveed Ahmed, September 15, 2011)



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High-Speed Rail Authority

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Name/
Nombre: NAVEED AHMED

Organization/
Organización: Business and land owner.

(Optional/Opcional)
Address/Domicilio: _____

Phone Number/
Número de teléfono: _____

City, State, Zip code/
Ciudad, estado, código postal:
Chowchilla, CA 93610

Email address/
Correo electrónico: Apnaprya@hotmail.com

349-2

349-1

Dear Chairperson:

Please See attached letter, along with drawing. Why there is a hump or bump in drawing at A2-UPRR and area around Avenue 24? That hump or bump of A2-UPRR at Ave 24, Chowchilla effects our Site at South West Corner of Highway 99 and Avenue 24. Please talk to your engineers, Professionals and legal to look into that hump or bump affecting our Site APN 027-053-008, 027-053-009, 027-053-010 and 027-053-011 and explain in Writing, So our experts can review That. Note Keeping A2-UPRR Straight does affects our Site.

Honorable Thomas J. Umberg, Chair
California High-Speed Rail Authority
770 L Street, Suite 800
Sacramento, California 95814

September 15, 2011

Re: Opposition to High Speed Rail (HSR) A2-UPRR/Avenue24
Alignment(s)

Dear Mr. Umberg:

I'm the property representative of certain commercial property within the State Route 99 corridor that is severely and adversely impacted by the recent change in the A2 High Speed Rail ("HSR") Plan. The commercial property at issue is situated at the southwest corner of HWY 99 and Avenue 24 in the City of Chowchilla, County of Madera.

This letter provides **NOTICE** of our grave concerns regarding the recently-proposed Alternative A2-UPRR/SR99 of the High-Speed Rail Route. While we support A1-BNSF staying South of SR152, we strongly oppose the A2-UPRR/Avenue 24 (Henry Miller) alignment(s) as currently being proposed by HSR, A1-BNSF would utilize the existing Transportation Corridor of the BNSF. It would be on the outskirts of the town and therefore have far less impact on the existing communities and businesses. It remains the preferred alternative route statewide. As per our understanding of CHSRA Board Resolution 05-01 (November 2, 2005) which certified the Program EIR for the High Speed Train System and clearly approved the alignment of the BNSF (A-1) alignment in Madera County. Now it is with great concern that we're unable to track the fractured decision-making with regard to movement away from the "preferred route" in the Program EIR to the Project EIR for the Merced to Fresno Route. The CHSRA Board by resolution certifying the Program EIR/EIS declared the "preferred route"

Submission 349 (Naveed Ahmed, September 15, 2011) - Continued

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to be the A1-BNSF alignment; but then in the Draft Project EIR/EIS Ch. 6 where it states "In 2008, EPA and USACE concurred that the preferred network alternative was most likely to contain the LEDPA. In the Central Valley, the Authority selected the UPRR/SR 99 corridor as part of the preferred network alternative, but recommended continued study of the BNSF corridor." (Page 6-2). We like to know how, when and where did the CHSRA make that decision and how did the Authority notify the public that such a decision was being considered? There is a major inconsistency between the Program EIR/EIS, Subsequent Program EIR/EIS and the Project Level EIR/EIS.

349-3

Please consider the following advantages and good reasons for preferring A1-BNSF:

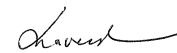
- The BNSF MOU is established for sharing the A1-BNSF right of way;
- The least constraints as compared to A2-UPRR;
- Supported by the local agencies;
- No relocation of businesses or permanent closure of businesses;
- No impact on commercial activity and industrial structures;
- No loss of jobs;
- No loss of critical tax revenue to the local agencies;
- Fewer miles of elevated track and fewer overpasses if any;
- No blight of cities;
- Long portions of at-grade-level tracks could be utilized;
- BNSF Railroad Authority cooperating to share existing rights of way. (BNSF Authority is cooperative, as evidenced by the MOU).
- Does not conflict with or result in substantial damage to longstanding land use plans and land uses, all of which were lawfully established.
- "A great advantage of the A1-BNSF alignment is that much of the HSR system could be constructed at-grade such that

349-3

the freight track would be grade separated along with the adjacent HSR tracks. This would benefit freight services and communities by reducing noise (due to the elimination of horn noise and gate noise from existing services), providing improved safety, freeing automobile traffic and improving air quality through reduced congestion." (2005 Program EIR Ch. 6a pg. 6A-10).

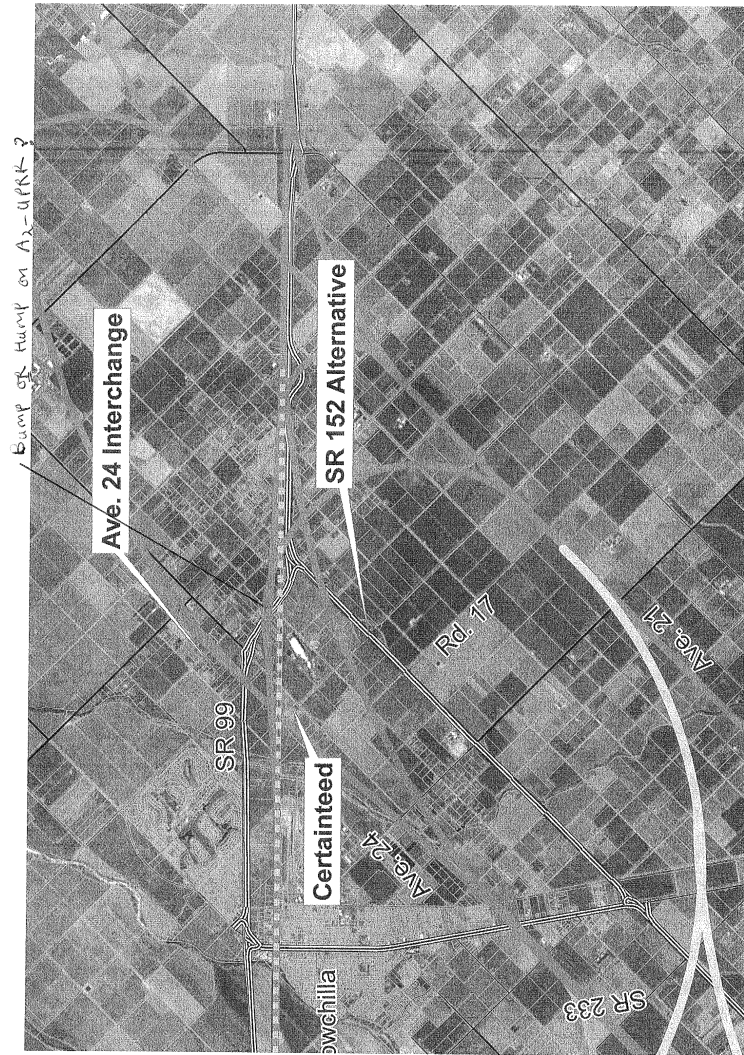
Your prompt attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact us.

Very truly yours



Naveed Ahmed
Representing Land & Business Owners
P. O. Box 520
Chowchilla, CA 93610

Submission 349 (Naveed Ahmed, September 15, 2011) - Continued



Response to Submission 349 (Naveed Ahmed, September 15, 2011)

349-1

The "hump" is needed to cross over existing SR99 structures. See Volume III Alignments and Other Plans for details on the project alignment.

349-2

See MF-Response-GENERAL-1, MF-Response-GENERAL-10, and MF-Response-GENERAL-2.

349-3

See MF-Response-GENERAL-10.

Submission 438 (Nareed Ahmed, September 15, 2011)

438-1

14 MR. AHMED: Hi, my name is Nareed Ahmed, and I am
15 a local business owner and property owner.

16 As previous gentleman mentioned, that business is
17 spinal cord of each community. My business is located
18 along 99 at Avenue 24 which will very seriously get
19 impacted because of this A2 track. So we are opposing A2
20 and supporting A1. If High-Speed Railroad Authority wants
21 to go through Madera County, that's what our proposal is.

438-2

22 No. 2, why these existing businesses are vital to
23 the local economy. If you look at the history of our
24 ex-president, George W. Bush, went to China for the
25 business trade. Business. Not for agriculture. Our

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438-2

1 previous governor, Arnold, went to China to do the
2 business trade with them. So the business relationship.
3 And the current president, Barack Obama, went to China to
4 do business. So it is the business, business, and
5 business. I know agriculture is also important, but we
6 cannot ignore the business community.

7 It will be devastating for the State of
8 California, particularly for Madera County, if the
9 businesses will be disturbed. Why the people need to do
10 the business once their business will get impacted because
11 of this high-speed rail? They will move to Nevada or to
12 some other states or might into Mexico or Saudi Arabia,
13 India, China, or Bangladesh.

14 So it is very, very important that listen to the
15 business community to keep these local jobs. Otherwise --
16 unemployment rate of this community is already 15 to 18
17 percent. And why not this money should be spent for
18 existing Amtrak, to improve that instead of letting it go
19 down the drain?

20 The initial cost was 33 billion and now it is 85
21 billion. That's what my understanding is. Who is going
22 to end up paying all this? We will end up paying all
23 this. And the people sitting in Sacramento, they are
24 looking for their job security. That's all it is. This
25 is unfair.

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Submission 438 (Nareed Ahmed, September 15, 2011) - Continued

438-3

1 Another thing -- let me go back to A2. I'm
2 opposing A2. My property is located on Avenue 24 and 99.
3 From Merced to Fresno, I'm talking about that track. From
4 Merced, the track is on the west side of A2. All of a
5 sudden Chowchilla community, it comes to east side. Why?
6 Why is it making zigzag? That is how my property get
7 involved with this.
8 From east -- from west side of the A2 from Union
9 Pacific railroad track to the east side of the Union
10 Pacific railroad track in Chowchilla area, and when it
11 makes loop, my property get involved over there. The
12 track is right here, existing track. So once it is coming
13 from Merced, why don't it stays on the west side of UP?
14 Why is it making zigzag?

16 MR. AHMED: Thank you very much. I keep on
17 asking. Nobody has answered so far that why there is a
18 loop, and that's how my property get involved.

Response to Submission 438 (Nareed Ahmed, September 15, 2011)

438-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-10.

438-2

See MF-Responses-SOCIAL-3.

438-3

The alignment was developed to avoid numerous obstacles (Chowchilla Airport, SR99/SR152 interchange, CertainTeed, etc.) while following existing transportation corridors (UPRR and SR99).

Submission 433 (Ricardo Arredondo, Board of Education for Madera Unified School District,
Area 6 / Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, September 15, 2011)

433-1

19 MR. ARREDONDO: Three Ricks. Good afternoon. My
20 name is Ricardo Arredondo. I am here to speak on the
21 Merced to Fresno segment. I'm a trustee and clerk for the
22 Board of Education for Madera Unified School District,
23 Area 6, and president of Madera Hispanic Chamber of
24 Commerce.

25 High-speed rail provides us with clean energy

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433-1

1 alternatives to the congested transportation corridor
2 through our county and the San Joaquin Valley that is
3 Highway 99. We are for minimizing, or I am for minimizing
4 at least, the detrimental impacts of high-speed to our ag
5 community while understanding that some impacts are
6 unavoidable for the project to go forward.

7 I have studied the alternatives, and I have
8 concluded that the A2 alignment through the City of Madera
9 is the most efficient for high-speed rail and A1 alignment
10 is the most detrimental to our ag community. We must not
11 lose sight that the ag industry is the primary economic
12 engine of Madera. It has dominated our economy, and it is
13 the major employer of our migrant population. A2
14 preserves our ag industry and maintains the integrity of
15 Madera.

16 Now I agree with what Supervisor David Rogers of
17 District 2 here in Madera County had to say as it related
18 to the impacts of the high-speed rail project. District 2
19 would result -- receive most of the impacts, is probably
20 the most impacted and project critical segment in the
21 state as it relates to the project. A1, A2, the Y, and
22 every proposed site of the head maintenance facility
23 within Madera County is within his district, so I give a
24 lot of reverence to his comments.

433-2

25 But regarding transportation for our schools, the

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Submission 433 (Ricardo Arredondo, Board of Education for Madera Unified School District,
Area 6 / Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, September 15, 2011) - Continued

433-2

1 A1 represents 30 percent more road closures than the A2.
2 Moreover, none of the road closures along A2 would impact
3 transportation for the Madera Unified School District. A2
4 alignment along the E Street corridor is the most blighted
5 commercial corridor in Madera. The elimination of
6 underperforming commercial property and the opportunity
7 for infill is greatly needed, as has been demonstrated by
8 our redevelopment department attempted to eliminate
9 cavities by purchasing property for the sake of
10 redeveloping that area into a visually appealing and
11 well-performing corridor.

433-3

12 Now, the span of the elevated track in Madera
13 County should be reduced. And I'm speaking regarding the
14 A2 alignment, should be reduced. Right now it's inclusive
15 of some area south of Avenue 12 and north of Avenue 17.
16 And by having that span of track elevated, having to get
17 over Avenue 12 and 17 raises the height of the structure.
18 Now, rather than do that, earlier projections had the
19 elevation of the track more confined to within the area of
20 Avenue 15 1/2 and Cleveland Avenue.

21 So in doing so, the height of the structure could
22 be reduced by approximately 20 feet. More importantly the
23 cost of construction would be reduced by approximately 300
24 million dollars.

25 Thank you for your time.

49

Response to Submission 433 (Ricardo Arredondo, Board of Education for Madera Unified School District, Area 6 / Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, September 15, 2011)

433-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-2 and MF-Response-GENERAL-10.

433-2

See MF-Response-S&S-1 and MF-Response-TRAFFIC-2.

433-3

The design team will investigate the possibility of reducing the length of aerial structure through the county during 30% design if the selected alternative is chosen. Reduction in the height of the structure in between highway interchanges and other key areas may be possible, but it would be considered and evaluated during 30% design. It would not be feasible to place the HST tracks at ground level in downtown Madera due to the numerous street crossings. We have studied potential grade separations of downtown Madera streets over a ground level HST and UPRR tracks and determined that traffic circulation would be severely impacted due to the close proximity of major north-south streets, particularly Gateway Drive. Another critical location is the railroad spur track that serves Azteca Milling (at Avenue 18) as well as the Country Club Road crossing. The HST tracks must be aerial at the railroad spur track crossing and a grade separation at Country Club would not be feasible due to the proximity of the SR 99 ramps and Cleveland Avenue intersection. It may be possible for the HST tracks to drop down to ground level south of Olive Avenue however at Avenue 12 there is a floodplain at Cottonwood Creek that would preclude placing the HST tracks at ground level while passing underneath the future Avenue 12 interchange.

Submission 422 (Lorraine Bennett, September 15, 2011)

24 MS. BENNETT: My name is Lorraine Bennett. I'm a
25 farmer, and perhaps I'm going to ask you some questions

25

422-1

422-2

1 rather than making a statement.

2 If the federal government does not come through
3 with its 50 percent of this cost and the state is
4 supposedly going to be 25 percent, and private industry
5 the rest, and we build our railroad from Brent -- from
6 Borden -- which I hope you've all seen the village which
7 the papers say, which of course it's not a village. It's
8 a motel and nothing else -- to Corcoran, and if this thing
9 is built and we do not get the funding, what is going to
10 happen with this? Is it going to become -- can it become
11 part of Amtrak or is it going to be the, you know,
12 railroad to nowhere?

13 The physical impact on our county, especially the
14 farming community -- and I do not farm in that area, I
15 will tell you that. But if you take into consideration
16 the irrigation canals and problems, what happens when you
17 split acreages, when you cannot farm from one part of your
18 property to the other, and also the transportation of
19 moving farm products and people from one area to the
20 other.

21 It is really very poorly thought out. I have
22 come to your other meetings, including the one out at the
23 junior college, and I have been truly quite disappointed
24 because you have not addressed those problems in
25 particular.

26

Submission 422 (Lorraine Bennett, September 15, 2011) - Continued

422-1

1 I thank you for your time, but as -- and I'll be
2 honest. I voted for high-speed, but I have been very
3 disappointed. I'm disappointed with the costs already,
4 and the future costs are astronomical. I really don't
5 want grandchildren and great grandchildren paying for
6 something that is not going to at least do something for
7 our Valley, merely for the San Francisco or Sacramento/Los
8 Angeles situation.
9 I thank you.

Response to Submission 422 (Lorraine Bennett, September 15, 2011)

422-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-1; MF-Response-GENERAL-14; and MF-Response-GENERAL-18.

422-2

See MF-Response-AGRICULTURE-2 and MF-Response-AGRICULTURE-3.

Submission 417 (Gilbert Cabrera, Operating Engineers Joint Apprenticeship Committee,
September 15, 2011)

21 MR. CABRERA: Thank you. Thank you guys for
22 giving me some time to speak here. My name is Gilbert
23 Cabrera, and I am speaking for both sections of the rail,
24 and I am representing the Operating Engineers Joint
25 Apprenticeship Committee.

17

PALERMO REPORTING SERVICES 209.577.4451

417-1

1 We have approximately 400 apprentices that would
2 definitely love to be part of this rail project. I'm sure
3 that you guys were involved in this rail project, when you
4 guys got asked or, you know, were appointed to this
5 project, that's probably something that you guys hold
6 highly and can utilize in your future.

7 So I'm talking on behalf of approximately 30
8 apprentices out of this -- out of this jurisdiction right
9 here. And we've got four of them not working right now,
10 and we definitely could utilize this as a pathway to, one,
11 bring more apprentices into our apprenticeship program.
12 We had approximately 900 that we're representing, 46
13 Northern California counties, and we're down to 363
14 overall.

15 So obviously in the last four, five years we
16 haven't had too many jobs to actually put our apprentices
17 to work, so this will definitely boost, you know, the
18 training that is required for those apprentices to
19 continue and progress in their apprenticeship.

20 We're also looking to utilize this as a way to
21 bring in a lot more females into this industry. So we
22 want to be at 20 percent females. Right now we're at six
23 percent. So we are definitely going to utilize this to --
24 for training and for the future in our construction
25 industry.

18

PALERMO REPORTING SERVICES 209.577.4451

Submission 417 (Gilbert Cabrera, Operating Engineers Joint Apprenticeship Committee,
September 15, 2011) - Continued

1

Thank you.

Response to Submission 417 (Gilbert Cabrera, Operating Engineers Joint Apprenticeship
Committee, September 15, 2011)

417-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-9 and MF-Response-GENERAL-19.

Submission 428 (Wayne Cederquist, September 15, 2011)

428-1 2 MR. CEDERQUIST: Hi, my name is Wayne Cederquist.
3 I am a rancher here in Madera. And I think you all know
4 the Farm Bureau has gone on record, the Board of
5 Supervisors has gone on record saying we support this
6 along the existing transportation corridors.

428-2 7 I actually will lose an edge of my property if
8 the train goes down I guess it's the A2, the Union Pacific
9 tracks, but that is something I can live with. I have
10 seen other alignments that show the train going diagonally
11 through the middle of one of my properties, another
12 property, neighbors' properties. That is disastrous for a
13 farm. Totally destroys the value of the farm by doing
14 that.

428-1 15 Again, existing transportation corridors would
16 provide minimal damage to farm property around here. When
17 you start taking this thing diagonally across country, how
18 much destruction, how many jobs are going to be lost doing
19 that when you add up one here, one there, three there.
20 Quite an impact.
21 Thank you.

Response to Submission 428 (Wayne Cederquist, September 15, 2011)

428-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-2.

428-2

See MF-Response-AGRICULTURE-2, MF-Response-AGRICULTURE-3, and MF-Response-GENERAL-2.

Submission 341 (Joseph Chaudoin, September 15, 2011)

Comment Period Extended to
October 13, 2011

El periodo a nacer comentarios
está prolongado hasta del
13 de octubre de 2011



CALIFORNIA
High-Speed Rail Authority

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Name/
Nombre:

Joseph Chaudoin

Organization/
Organización:

Citizen

(Optional/Opcional)

Address/Domicilio: 166 Roberts Ave. #201

Phone Number/
Número de teléfono:

(559) 673-1606

City, State, Zip code/
Ciudad, estado, código postal:

Madera, CA 93637

Email address/
Correo electrónico:

josephchaudoin@hotmail.com

341-1

I would first like to say that while I would like to see more
jobs in Madera, CA, I strongly believe High Speed Rail is going
to slightly hinder things. That being said, I would like to know
what is going to happen with real estate in Madera & Merced
counties. I would especially like to know what will happen with
the Madera Drive-in which has been here in Madera for quite
some time. Thank you very much for your time and patience.



CALIFORNIA
High-Speed Rail Authority



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Railroad
Administration

Response to Submission 341 (Joseph Chaudoin, September 15, 2011)

341-1

MF-Response-GENERAL-10.

Impacts on the Madera Drive-in Theater identified in the EIR/EIS occur only for the UPRR/ SR99 Alternative, and include a severe noise impact (See Table 3.4-12 of the EIR/EIS) and partial acquisition of the property that would displace one ancillary structure. However, since the Hybrid Alternative has been selected as the Preferred Alternative for the Merced to Fresno Section, and this alternative does not include the area discussed in the comment, no impacts on the Madera Drive-in Theater are expected.

Submission 342 (Joseph Chaudoin, September 15, 2011)

Comment Period Extended to October 13, 2011	El periodo a hacer comentarios está prolongado hasta del 13 de octubre de 2011
 CALIFORNIA High-Speed Rail Authority	Comment Card Tarjeta de Comentarios

Merced to Fresno High-Speed Train Section Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) – Public Hearings September 2011	Tren de Alta Velocidad Sección Merced a Fresno Anteproyecto del Informe de Impacto Medioambiental/Declaración de Impacto Medioambiental (EIR/EIS) - Audiencias Públicas Septiembre 2011
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Merced to Fresno HST Environmental Review, 770 L Street, Suite 800, Sacramento, CA 95814

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---	--

Name/ Nombre: <u>Joseph Chaudoin</u>	Organization/ Organización: <u>Citizen</u>
(Optional/Opcional) Address/Domicilio: _____	Phone Number/ Número de teléfono: _____
City, State, Zip code/ Ciudad, estado, código postal: _____	Email address/ Correo electrónico: _____

342-1

Concerning Madera, adding a stop you won't always have trains stopping in Fresno or Merced. If need be you can always have a train stop in Madera for people to get in or even get off. People in Madera might want to use the train but not want to drive to Fresno or Merced to get on (or off for that matter). Then you might even people who want to come directly to Madera to see friends and or family or even there are people who work here or want to work here. A stop having Madera would help that greatly. Please ~~re~~ reconsider Madera for a stop. Thank you.

Response to Submission 342 (Joseph Chaudoin, September 15, 2011)

342-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-2.

Submission 415 (Joseph Chaudoin, September 15, 2011)

415-1

13 MR. CHAUDOIN: Good evening. Sorry. Good
14 evening. My name is Joseph Chaudoin. I live here in
15 Madera. I'm representing myself and my fellow Maderians.

16 I've lived here for 26 years. Now I understand
17 that with the growth of the State of California and even
18 the growth of our union, transportation is going to be
19 very difficult, but I also think that you guys need to
20 understand that bad economy or no bad economy, this is
21 going to hurt lots of families and lots of businesses.

22 And I don't really know what a lot of people are
23 going to do when the time comes for their houses to be
24 demolished or their businesses as well. I just want you
25 guys to really think about what you're going to do and

15

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1 understand that there are going to be families and there
2 will be businesses displaced because of this.

3 Thank you.

Response to Submission 415 (Joseph Chaudoin, September 15, 2011)

415-1

See MF-Response-SOCIAL-1 and MF-Response-SOCIAL-3.

Submission 418 (Joe Correa, September 15, 2011)

418-1

4 MR. CORREA: Good afternoon, panel. My name is
5 Joe Correa. I'm a retired united steel worker, lifelong
6 Madera resident, and I wish to speak on all the sections
7 from San Francisco to Bakersfield.

8 At any given time I believe the unemployment in
9 Madera is anywhere from 13 to 20, 22 percent. This would
10 definitely help our economy in Madera County and
11 throughout the Valley. I want to speak on behalf of the
12 maintenance yard. It's -- Madera's located -- central
13 location, Madera. I mean it's the best place you could
14 build it.

15 That you're speaking of 16,000 temporary jobs,
16 those jobs being -- the feeding for the jobs will be
17 whether it's uniform wash, suppliers. You're talking a
18 lot of jobs in Madera. And I'd highly appreciate it if
19 you would consider Madera County for the high-speed rail.

20 Thank you very much.

Response to Submission 418 (Joe Correa, September 15, 2011)

418-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-9, MF-Response-GENERAL-10, and MF-Response-GENERAL-15.

Submission 354 (Sharon Doshier, September 15, 2011)

Comment Period Extended to
October 13, 2011

El periodo a nacer comentarios
está prolongado hasta del
13 de octubre de 2011



CALIFORNIA
High-Speed Rail Authority

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Tarjeta de Comentarios

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Public Hearings **Medioambiental (EIR/EIS) - Audiencias Públicas**
September 2011 Septiembre 2011

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Name/
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Correo electrónico: martin4sharon@gmail.com

354-1

I am very opposed to this project
Regardless of which route is chosen
there is not a high speed rail in the
world that is self funded or pay for its self.
Think about paying additional taxes to keep it
running.
There are plenty of jobs available in
Madera County the problem of unemployment
is uneducated lazy people that really do not
want to work & better themselves to get a job.
good luck with the hiring process.

Response to Submission 354 (Sharon Doshier, September 15, 2011)

354-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-6, MF-Response-GENERAL-14, and MF-Response-GENERAL-18.

Submission 435 (Rick Farinelli, September 15, 2011)

24 MR. FARINELLI: Rick Farinelli, Madera citizen,
25 1748 Glade Avenue, Madera, California.

50

435-1

435-2

1 I just -- you know how you hear things and they
2 go around and everything else from Bakersfield all the way
3 to Merced. That's what I'm interested in. First thing
4 that I'm interested in getting answers to is basically how
5 are you going to recover, I understand, over a hundred
6 million dollars in taxes by the time we take this land
7 away from the farmers and different areas and businesses
8 on the track.

9 And then the other thing I understand is the
10 first several years -- we're talking about green power and
11 all that stuff, but I understand that we're going to be
12 running diesels on this track instead of electric. And
13 then my third question is how are we going to get the
14 power to this massive project when California is so
15 strapped on power as it is right now. Proving that point
16 is the brownout that we had down in the southern area and
17 Arizona.

18 That's all I'd like to say. Thank you. And I am
19 against the railway.

Response to Submission 435 (Rick Farinelli, September 15, 2011)

435-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-6, and MF-Response-GENERAL-18.

435-2

See MF-Response-PUE-3.

Submission 421 (Lourdes Herrera, Madera Coalition, September 15, 2011)

421-1

4 MS. HERRERA: Good afternoon. I'm Lourdes
5 Herrera. I'm working for Madera Coalition, and I come in
6 here -- I would like to talk to you about the history of
7 Madera. It's part of my life because I come here from
8 another country to live here in Madera. And I would like
9 to Madera be history, planning of the history in this
10 thing, and to support this project. No part of the bad
11 things like the obesity, the teen pregnancy, the bad
12 things.

13 I think if this project can be accepted for the
14 city or the train can be here in Madera, we start to
15 training the community to do many jobs. Not only work in
16 the agriculture, no. Like the teenagers can be training
17 in technical programs to support this project. And the
18 community needs to be more informed about this. I think
19 we need to be part of the history.

20 Thank you.

Response to Submission 421 (Lourdes Herrera, Madera Coalition, September 15, 2011)

421-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-2. The commenter suggests the alternative of locating a station in Madera. This proposed alternative will not be included in the Final EIR/EIS because it would not substantially reduce any of the significant environmental impacts identified for the project. As such, it would not qualify as an alternative under CEQA (see CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6).

Submission 340 (David W. Hubbard, September 15, 2011)

Comment Period Extended to
October 13, 2011

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está prolongado hasta del
13 de octubre de 2011



CALIFORNIA
High-Speed Rail Authority

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Nombre: David W. Hubbard

Organization/
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Phone Number/
Número de teléfono: (559)-278-8414

City, State, Zip code/
Ciudad, estado, código postal:
Madera, CA 93638

Email address/
Correo electrónico: davidhu@csufresno.edu

Gentlemen:

340-1

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. I believe
the High-Speed Rail Project should be modified to use
existing track. There are trains^{passenger} that can gently sway
when going on a curve. This allows the high-speed trains to
travel close to twice the normal^{normally} speed they go. By
using existing rails we will save billions of dollars
in construction and billions in property costs. Also the cost
for riding the train would be within reason for the
lower middle class and higher lower class. Otherwise the cost
will be as much as a plane ticket, and I believe the cost
from Fresno to Los Angeles is over \$300. Using existing rail it
could be around \$50.
Thank you!

Response to Submission 340 (David W. Hubbard, September 15, 2011)

340-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-1 and MF-Response-GENERAL-6.

It is not possible to achieve 220 mph on existing tracks. Additional tracks would be needed to accommodate additional passenger rail service.

Submission 425 (Alberto Jacques, Azteca Milling, September 15, 2011)

425-1

5 MR. JACQUES: Yes. Good afternoon. Thank you
6 for allow us to be here, of course, members of the board
7 of the agency and members of the Railroad Administration.
8 My name is Alberto Jacques, and I am the director of
9 manufacturing, Azteca Milling Company for the whole
10 division.
11 And among our concerns, as Mr. Osegueda was
12 telling you in regards to other things and the
13 encroachment, we have some things and I would like to
14 explain a little bit one subject that it is very important
15 which is some of our first steps in our strategic planning
16 that we have for next year. In fact, it's going to be
17 starting in 2012.
18 And it is very important because we are planning
19 to increase the capacity here at the Madera location, and
20 of course it is important to us because we weren't
21 planning this for at least two years. And we are against
22 the alternative A2 because of some of the concerns that
23 already Gerardo told you. And this one, that it can be a
24 huge difficult for us in our strategic planning.

We are planning to increase this capacity, or the

30

425-2

1 milling capacity of the plant in this unit. The one that
2 we are planning to build is at least twice of the capacity
3 of the one that is currently already here. So we have a
4 lot of commitment to do that because of the requirements,
5 the strict requirements that we have right now in the
6 whole region.

7 Of course we won't be seeking for a kind of
8 improvement here in this state, although we have, of
9 course, our plant already here in Madera, California. So
10 we would like to increase the capacity because of our
11 sales, but we have this uncertainty on how it's going to
12 be affecting us with the encroachment that we don't know
13 for sure how bad it's going to be for us.

14 So, of course, we have all of the distribution
15 channels and all the resources that we already have with
16 the plant that is running right now. We would like to
17 know from you, members of the agency, what are the plans
18 and the steps that are going to be following? Because we
19 are on this plan -- the strategic planning for next years
20 and we need to know at least prior to the first quarter of
21 2012 if there's going to be affecting us and how, how it's
22 going to be, the mention of this affecting.

23 Because if it is something that it's going to be
24 encroaching us, I don't want to say is only part of the
25 service of the plant, but the heart of the plant that is

31

Submission 425 (Alberto Jacques, Azteca Milling, September 15, 2011) - Continued

425-2

1 currently running, which is the milling and the cooking,
2 we are planning to not only shut down this one because you
3 are going to be shutting us down, but perhaps we can
4 consider to make our strategic planning in another state
5 with the new expansion.

6 So please give us that information and, of
7 course, accurate information in regards how long or what's
8 going to be exact dimension of the effects.

9 Thank you so much for your time.

Response to Submission 425 (Alberto Jacques, Azteca Milling, September 15, 2011)

425-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-10, MF-Response-GENERAL-4, MF-Response-SOCIAL-1 and MF-Response-SOCIAL-3.

425-2

See MF-Response-GENERAL-10, MF-Response-GENERAL-4, MF-Response-SOCIAL-1, and MF-Response-SOCIAL-3.

Submission 426 (Stan Jensen, Azteca Milling, September 15, 2011)

426-1 | 13 MR. JENSEN: My name is Stan Jensen. I've been
14 employed with the company since it began. Just personally
15 it would be a sad thing for me to see the high-speed rail,
16 worst case scenario, come through and remove that facility
17 from the county. We'd lose jobs and revenue for the
18 county and the city.

426-2 | 19 Aside from that, I wanted to bring up a point on
20 the production plant that we have at Avenue 18 1/2. What
21 I'm a little bit concerned about is the facility at 20 1/2
22 and 99. It's proposed to put an undercrossing beneath the
23 high-speed rail to access the plant. As I understand it,
24 that's a six percent grade that they propose. That's in
25 my opinion very steep for trucks to go in and out of.

32

426-2 | 1 During harvest there can be as many as 40 trucks lined up
2 in line moving two spaces at a time. On a six percent
3 grade, to start a truck at 80,000 pounds is not a good
4 scenario. A lot of the equipment that comes in is used
5 seasonally which means it's not -- let's say it's well
6 used rather than say it's old.

7 So the likelihood of a breakdown in that
8 undercrossing is going to be high. If it gets adjusted
9 because of that, it could impede our ability to receive
10 corn that time of year.

11 Thank you.

Response to Submission 426 (Stan Jensen, Azteca Milling, September 15, 2011)

426-1

See MF-Response-SOCIAL-3, MF-Response-GENERAL-14

426-2

Grade separations are designed using the recommended maximum grade of 4%.
These grades would work for farm equipment/truck traffic.

Submission 440 (Jaswinder Kang, September 15, 2011)

7 MR. KANG: Good evening, gentlemen and ladies.
8 We are discussing very important project which is very
9 crucial for the economy of California and especially
10 Central California.

440-1

12 MR. KANG: Jaswinder Kang. I'm sorry.
13 I have a property which is going through the
14 route I think which is called BNSF A1. I have three
15 parcels -- actually four parcels. Three parcels with BNSF
16 going through it. If that was the preferable route, I
17 have no comment. I'm ready to go through my property.
18 But I have to comment for the benefit of the whole
19 community, for the benefit of the whole Central
20 California.

21 We need jobs. We need to get this project
22 moving, away from the party line. We should not come as
23 the Democrat or as a Republican. This is a very, very
24 good project which will create lot of jobs, lot of benefit
25 to the Madera town. I don't know why we are so behind.

59

440-2

1 We should be ahead of the whole Central California. We're
2 the heart of California. We're the center. We should get
3 involved very, very fast to get it moving forward, but we
4 are still I think -- even after three years, we are still
5 discussing this, which route to go, where to go.

6 Sometimes -- it's very important, as previous
7 gentleman said that business, business, business. Yes, we
8 all know business. I'm a business owner. My business is
9 next to the A1 route. It will be affected. My land is
10 there, will to be affected. But if that will be the
11 preferable route for -- which benefit the whole community,
12 the state, and the people, I'm for it.

13 But we should discuss the A2 route, why it is
14 better. I'm from India. Twenty-five years back I moved
15 from there. Now this is my country. 99 freeway is
16 already there. We have all the investment is done. We
17 not only need to consider why we're going here and there.
18 It's a lot of situation. If the main track is near the
19 freeway, suppose there's an emergency. Suppose there's an
20 accident, which will happen sooner or later when we're
21 going through the high-speed rail. That will be the
22 impact.

23 How are these two are going to be faster if you
24 go through the 99 route all through the state, it is just
25 there. We don't need to build any other freeway. For any

60

Submission 440 (Jaswinder Kang, September 15, 2011) - Continued

1 other emergency situation, we are there. We can close the
2 freeway if there's any major disaster. We can get to the
3 people. Things happen. We all know, and it will happen
4 once the freeway -- there will be disaster. There will be
5 an emergency. We need to look into that route too.

6 99 freeway is the very, very best route to convey
7 all emergency situations, and it will reduce our cost to
8 build the freeway because the -- most of the land in
9 between the freeway and the railroad line is already
10 there. It is not being used. Most of the area all
11 through the California is already there. Either the
12 railway line has the right of way or the 99 freeway.
13 State has the right of way, so we already are there.

14 So we don't need to jeopardize more agriculture
15 land. We don't need to sacrifice agriculture land. We
16 don't need to go through lot of more legal problems.
17 Swing this, swing that, delaying it more.

19 MR. KANG: Since the state is already there, we
20 should go for the A2 route.

21 Thank you.

Response to Submission 440 (Jaswinder Kang, September 15, 2011)

440-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-9 and MF-Response-GENERAL-10

440-2

See MF-Response-S&S-3 and MF-Response-S&S-9.

Submission 443 (Jaswinder Kang, September 15, 2011)

443-1

7 MR. KANG: Good evening again. I'm Jaswinder
8 Kang. I spoke a while ago. I think three minutes time
9 definitely is not enough for anyone to say anything.
10 That's what I think, especially for people like me who
11 talk, talk, talk.
12 Since we are into this very, very great project I
13 just want to put my input. As I say, I have three parcels
14 on A1 alignment. I have 41 acre which will be affected,
15 but if it solves the problem of this community or the
16 state, I am ready to give up my land. And even that can
17 benefit us. As a community we need to stop fighting --
18 that's what my main thing is -- on the party issues or on
19 who can get favor out of this, who cannot get favor out of
20 this, who can get benefit, who cannot get benefit and why.
21 We all need to work for the public. We're all --
22 you guys are on job. I am on job. I am doing like all
23 most of the people right here. We need to think about the
24 people on the other side of the aisle who has no job for
25 the last two years, three years who are suffering badly.

66

443-1

1 Someone's grandparents working for eight dollars, seven
2 dollar an hour job. This is a great opportunity for all
3 of us to make it happen and make it happen fast. I hope
4 it's not too late for too many people who are so strongly
5 and so badly struggling in this economy.
6 We are all blessed. I believe all of us here, we
7 have good jobs, good place to live, sleep, eat,
8 everything, but there are millions who are suffering so
9 badly. And they're not out of the whole country. They're
10 also in the state, this great state of ours. We should
11 work together and we should work timely and as fast as we
12 can get this project moving so it can create jobs.
13 I'm in the favor of this because it will get lot
14 of engineering jobs. It will create a -- make a -- bring
15 a new vision for the students who are in schools or in
16 colleges what to do. They can see, okay, there are lot of
17 engineering jobs coming in a year, two year, four year so
18 they can focus on their education; they can do better.
19 Those are the things we need to do as a community, as the
20 leaders.
21 Not just my property is there. No, I can't let
22 it go through; I am being affected. Okay. I'm for it.
23 If it helps through the A1, you guys are welcome to go on
24 my property; I don't care. So long as it works for the
25 country, works for the state, works for the public. I was

67

Submission 443 (Jaswinder Kang, September 15, 2011) - Continued

1 born without clothes, and I'm going to die without
2 clothes. I know that. We didn't bring anything with us.
3 We're not going to take anything with us.
4 We need to remember, neither we born Republican,
5 neither we born Democrat. We do not know our names even,
6 who we are. Even we do not know if we're male or female
7 at that time when we're born. Someone told us. You look
8 like this you're a male; you look like this you're a
9 female. You look like this; your color is this.
10 We need to get over it. We need to come forward.
11 The whole world is looking towards us. We are so behind
12 in these kind of projects. I have no shame in saying that
13 I feel shameful, 25 years. I was India 1980. They have
14 the -- in Bombay they have the best rail system. Every 30
15 to 40 seconds on each track train leaves with millions of
16 people they move a day.

18 MR. KANG: Let's move forward. Let's get it
19 done.

Response to Submission 443 (Jaswinder Kang, September 15, 2011)

443-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-9.

Submission 414 (Daniel Krause, Californians for High-Speed Rail, September 15, 2011)

414-1 | 8 MR. KRAUSE: Hi. Thank you very much. My name
9 is Daniel Krause, executive director of Californians for
10 High-Speed Rail. I'm going to be speaking about the
11 Merced-Fresno piece.
12 A real quick general note that I just wanted to
13 mention, that our -- we represent the supporters statewide
14 and we're urging this project to move forward as quickly
15 as possible. I think the last speaker mentioned the jobs
16 piece and the economic situation and, you know, that's
17 kind of a no-brainer. We've got six billion dollars.
18 Let's move forward.
414-2 | 19 We do have some challenges on this -- the
20 Merced-Fresno section. We've noted that the cost
21 differential which we -- low range and the high range is
22 somewhere in the order of three billion dollars. So we're
23 hoping that a lot of work is done to make sure that we
24 really analyze -- I know there's a lot of pressures from
25 both sides on how to do the alignments and we're not

414-2 |

1 currently taking a position on that.
2 But I just want to make sure that there's -- find
3 ways to narrow that gap somehow because that's going to
4 put pressure on the project from other folks like in the
5 state capitol if they see we go all the way to the high
6 range. So if there's ways to work on, you know, with
7 value engineering and things like that, we would encourage
8 that as much as possible.
9 Thank you very much.

14

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Response to Submission 414 (Daniel Krause, Californians for High-Speed Rail, September 15, 2011)

414-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-9.

414-2

See MF-Response-GENERAL-18.

Submission 338 (Christopher Mariscotti, The Vineyard Restaurant, September 15, 2011)



Merced to Fresno High-Speed Train Section
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September 2011

Tren de Alta Velocidad Sección Merced a Fresno
Anteproyecto del Informe de Impacto
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Medioambiental (EIR/EIS) - **Audiencias Públicas**
Septiembre 2011

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Merced to Fresno HST Environmental Review, 770 L Street, Suite 800, Sacramento, CA 95814

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recibidos después de **28 de septiembre** no se
responderá en el EIR/EIS final.

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City, State, Zip code/
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Email address/
Correo electrónico: CHRIS@VINEYARDRESTAURANT.COM

338-1

I WOULD LIKE YOU TO KNOW I BELIEVE THE HSR
WOULD BE BAD ON LOCAL, STATE, FEDERAL LEVELS
LOCAL THE TRAIN WOULD FURTHER BIFURCATE MARIANA
IF IT USE THE U.P. LINE IT WILL DESTROY AG LAND
IF IT USES THE SP RAILROAD. NOW IS NOT GIVEN
THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT NOW ISN'T THE TIME TO
BEGIN A CONSTRUCTION PROJECT LIKE THIS FOR
STATE BUDGET, FEDERAL BUDGET. IN MY OPINION
THE ONLY WAY HSR MAKES SENSE FOR CALIFORNIA
IS TO RUN THE LINE ON THE T.S. CORRIDOR
TO CONNECT THE MAJOR CITIES. THE REAL HSR WILL NOT
BENEFIT US IN THE VALLEY AND OUTLANDIA
WOULD BE BADLY DAMAGED.

Response to Submission 338 (Christopher Mariscotti, The Vineyard Restaurant, September 15, 2011)

338-1

MF-Response-GENERAL-10 and MF-Response-GENERAL-2.

Submission 416 (Paul Martin, September 15, 2011)

416-1 | 5 Mr. Paul Martin. And do we have any additional
6 speaker cards?
7 MR. MARTIN: Hi. I am Paul Martin and I'm
8 representing only myself. Welcome to Madera County.
9 I am against the high-speed rail in a general
10 way. I believe the bond was passed only with deception.
11 I voted for it and I feel deceived. I would disagree with
416-2 | 12 Mr. Rodriguez. I think the best corridor is I-5 if you're
13 going to build it. I don't think it's economically
14 feasible anywhere, but if you're going to do it, put it
15 over on I-5 and use the Kerman railroad to get people to
16 Fresno.
17 We got a railroad out there. They can take
18 people across there, and with a little few hookups, they
19 can have a rapid rail transit to Fresno and be a lot
20 cheaper on I-5.
416-3 | 21 My concern in construction is the use of
22 electrical power. And my questions to be answered in the
23 EIR, and I know you don't respond to my questions, is
24 where -- what's the source for the power. This machine is
25 going to use a huge amount. I have no idea how much, but

16

PAI ERMO REPORTING SERVICES 209.577.4454

416-3 | 1 it's got to be a lot. And how are they going to get that
2 power from this source, wherever it is, coal, nuclear.
3 And where are the substations, how close together are the
4 substations.
5 And if we don't have a great infrastructure of
6 power source, my air conditioning is going to go dark
7 every time a train goes by. And I'm serious in saying
8 we've got to look at the source of power. We do not have
9 the power right now. It doesn't exist. It's going to
10 have to be built.
11 They're at their limit now, and they're going to
12 have to build power plants up and down the state as well
13 as substations every 20 miles or 40 miles to service this.
14 That's a huge amount of infrastructure which I don't think
15 has been covered. And without this, it won't go.
16 Thank you.

Response to Submission 416 (Paul Martin, September 15, 2011)

416-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-14.

416-2

See MF-Response-GENERAL-2.

416-3

See MF-Response-PUE-4, MF-Response-PUE-3, and MF-Response-PUE-1.

Submission 439 (Rosie Mason, September 15, 2011)

439-1

22 MS. MASON: (Through Interpreter) Hi, my name is
23 Rosie Mason. And even though we lived on Avenue 20 --
24 Avenue 8 and we are going to be impacted by the train, I
25 still think that this is good stimulation for the economy

58

1 and it will bring jobs to the area and bring additional
2 support to this area.

3 THE INTERPRETER: That's it.

Response to Submission 439 (Rosie Mason, September 15, 2011)

439-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-9.

Submission 355 (Steve Massaro, September 15, 2011)

Comments for HSR hearing in Madera 9/15/11

Gentlemen,

Although initially I was not opposed to the concept of HSR, I have become disillusioned with the probable outcome and the negative effects it will have on the Central valley.

355-1

When this project was put on the ballot in 2008 it was sold to the voting public at an estimated total cost of all phases to be 43 billion dollars. Now I hear estimates of over 100 billion. It would be financially irresponsible for this state or our federal government to carry this project forward at these amounts. There are much cheaper alternatives such as interstate 5 that should be brought back for further study.

Secondly, this project was supposed to use existing transportation corridors, which to the average voter means highways, express ways and rail ways, **not** local roadways, ditch banks and private farm roads. The EIR states that the project is to be built, **in a manner sensitive to and protective of California's unique natural resources.**

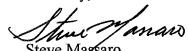
355-2

It's apparent to me that local, state and federal officials want to ignore the fact that we live in one of the most progressive, most productive food and fiber growing regions in the world. Central Valley agriculture is a natural resource in itself and should be protected as such. I think it would be criminal to slice and dice this last bastion of prime farmlands for what some call progress,,, I see it as the eventual death and urbanization of our food supply and our way of life.

355-3

I would also like to hand deliver this letter in support for the J. G. Boswell Co. request for an extension of the EIR comment period to 180 days. Given the enormous size of the EIR and the coincidental fact that it was released during the peak harvest time makes it virtually impossible to go through this document in the time allotted.

Sincerely,


Steve Massaro
20754 Road 16
Chowchilla, CA 93610

Response to Submission 355 (Steve Massaro, September 15, 2011)

355-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-14 and MF-Response-GENERAL-2.

355-2

See MF-Response-AGRICULTURE-1 and MF-Response-GENERAL-4.

355-3

See MF-Response-GENERAL-7.

Submission 431 (Steve Massaro, September 15, 2011)

23 MR. MASSARO: Thank you. My name is Steve
24 Massaro. I live in Chowchilla. My comments are kind of
25 general to both sections but more towards the Merced to

40

431-1

431-2

431-3

1 Fresno.

2 Ladies and gentlemen, although initially I was
3 not opposed to the concept of high-speed rail, I have
4 become disillusioned with the probable outcome and the
5 negative effects it will have on the Central Valley. When
6 this project was put on the ballot in 2008, it was sold to
7 the voting public at an estimated total cost of all phases
8 to be 43 billion dollars. Now I hear estimates of over
9 100 billion. It would be financially irresponsible for
10 this state or our federal government to carry this project
11 forward at these amounts. There are much cheaper
12 alternatives such as the Interstate 5 that should be
13 brought back for further study.

14 Secondly, this project was supposed to use
15 existing transportation corridors, which to the average
16 voter means highways, expressways, and railways. Not
17 local roadways, ditch banks, and private farm roads. The
18 EIR states that the project is to be built, and I quote,
19 "in a manner sensitive and protective of California's
20 unique natural resources."

21 It's apparent to me that local, state, and
22 federal officials want to ignore the fact that we live in
23 one of the most progressive, most productive food and
24 fiber growing regions in the world. Central Valley
25 agriculture is a natural resource in and of itself, and it

41

Submission 431 (Steve Massaro, September 15, 2011) - Continued

431-3

1 should be protected as such. I think it would be criminal
2 to slice and dice this bastion of prime farmlands for what
3 some call progress. I see it as the eventual death and
4 urbanization of our food supply and our way of life.

431-4

5 I would like to also hand-deliver a letter in
6 support for the J.G. Boswell Company's request for an
7 extension for the EIR comment period to 180 days. Given
8 the enormous size of the EIR and the coincidental fact
9 that it was released during the peak harvest time makes it
10 virtually impossible to go through this document in the
11 time allotted.

12 Thank you.

Response to Submission 431 (Steve Massaro, September 15, 2011)

431-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-14 and MF-Response-GENERAL-2.

431-2

See MF-Response-GENERAL-2.

431-3

See MF-Response-GENERAL-4 and MF-Response-AGRICULTURE-1.

431-4

See MF-Response-GENERAL-7.

Submission 430 (Ms. Meders, September 15, 2011)

8 MS. MEDERS: My comments pertain primarily to the
9 Merced to Fresno; however, they would also apply to Fresno
10 to Bakersfield.
11 Ladies and gentlemen, my husband and I farm and
12 ranch in Madera County. Madera County is ground zero in
13 this project and is a hit from both the north-south and
14 the east-west corridors. The alternative routes have
15 great adverse effects on our farming properties both on
16 the Avenue 24 bypass as well as the A1 route.
17 We will be formally presenting our specific
18 written comments regarding the EIR/EIS later in the
430-1 19 comment period; however, at this time we want to convey
20 our strong endorsement of the request by the J.G. Boswell
21 company for the extension of the comment period to a full
22 180 days or six months. It's ludicrous to imagine that we
23 can responsibly critique a 23,000-page document in 45
24 days.
430-2 25 In a cursory overview we've spotted numerous

39

430-2 1 inaccuracies, omissions, and undocumented generalizations
2 that must be addressed before finalizing the EIR/EIS.
430-3 3 Many of these issues when fully realized will increase the
4 cost of the project immensely. Of primary importance to
5 us is the disruption not only of our homes and businesses.
6 But in the very fabric of our community, its schools and
7 its citizenry. Madera County is one of the California's
8 top-producing agricultural counties. Farmland once
9 removed will never be replaced and the ability of this
10 nation to feed itself will be further jeopardized.
430-4 11 We also have grave doubts about the ridership
12 study published to date and the ability of this project to
13 carry itself financially without serious impact to
14 California's already overburdened citizens and taxpayers.
15 We improve -- we implore you to extend the comment period
16 for both the Merced to Fresno and Fresno to Bakersfield
17 sections to assure adequate input for a more reasoned
18 approach to the fulfillment of this project.
19 And thank you for your consideration.

Response to Submission 430 (Ms. Meders, September 15, 2011)

430-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-7.

430-2

See MF-Response-GENERAL-1.

430-3

See MF-Response-GENERAL-5 and MF-Response-GENERAL-4.

430-4

See MF-Response-GENERAL-6.

Submission 413 (Dave Mercer, Operating Engineers Local 3, September 15, 2011)

413-1

5 MR. MERCER: Hi, my name is Dave Mercer. I'm
6 with Operating Engineers Local 3, and I'm commenting on
7 both sections.

8 And just real quickly I just wanted to come here
9 today and represent the -- we have over a thousand members
10 in our local union. We're construction trade, and we
11 obviously support the high-speed rail. And we feel like
12 this is a important time to get this job, this project
13 started.

14 We've been impacted greatly because of the
15 current economic situation that we're in right now, and we
16 feel like this would -- this would help our members and it
17 would help cities that it impacts and the counties and
18 just the state overall. And -- excuse me. And we believe
19 that the people spoke back in 2008 when we passed
20 Proposition 1A, and we just look forward to working and
21 getting this project off the ground.

22 Thank you.

Response to Submission 413 (Dave Mercer, Operating Engineers Local 3, September 15, 2011)

413-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-9 and MF-Response-GENERAL-19.

Submission 343 (John Molino, September 15, 2011)

Comment Period Extended to
October 13, 2011

El periodo a hacer comentarios
está prolongado hasta del
13 de octubre de 2011



CALIFORNIA
High-Speed Rail Authority

Comment Card
Tarjeta de Comentarios

Merced to Fresno High-Speed Train Section
Draft Environmental Impact Report/
Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) –
Public Hearings
September 2011

Tren de Alta Velocidad Sección Merced a Fresno
Anteproyecto del Informe de Impacto
Medioambiental/Declaración de Impacto
Medioambiental (EIR/EIS) – **Audiencias Públicas**
Septiembre 2011

Please submit your completed comment card at the
end of the meeting, or mail to:

Por favor entregue su tarjeta al final de la reunión, o
envíela a una de las siguientes direcciones:

Merced to Fresno HST Environmental Review, 770 L Street, Suite 800, Sacramento, CA 95814

The comment period on the Draft EIR/EIS begins
August 15, 2011 and ends September 28, 2011.
Comments received after 5:00 p.m. on **September
28, 2011** will **not** be addressed in the Final EIR/EIS.

El periodo a hacer comentarios empieza a 15 de
agosto y termina a 28 de septiembre. Comentarios
reciben después de 5:00 p.m. a **28 de septiembre**
no se responderá en el EIR/EIS final.

Name/
Nombre: John Molino

Organization/
Organización: Landowner

(Optional/Opcional) P.O. Box 466
Address/Domicilio: Madera Ca 93639

Phone Number/
Número de teléfono: 559-232-0245

City, State, Zip code/
Ciudad, estado, código postal:

Email address/
Correo electrónico: JCMOL48@yahoo.com

343-1

We are concerned that our house well-house water-might
be in the projected 100' easement area.



CALIFORNIA
High-Speed Rail Authority



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Railroad
Administration

Response to Submission 343 (John Molino, September 15, 2011)

343-1

Appendix 3.1-A in Volume II of the EIR/EIS contains detailed maps with the project footprint overlaid on top of an aerial photograph and property boundaries. See MF-Response-AGRICULTURE-4.

Submission 420 (Baldwin Moy, California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc., September 15, 2011)

21 MR. MOY: I'm Baldwin Moy, California Rural Legal
22 Assistance. I'm speaking about the -- I'm speaking on the
23 Merced to Fresno route, part of the route, but I'm also --
24 it could be generalized to the Fresno to Bakersfield as
25 well. I'm here to speak on behalf of the protected

22

420-1

1 communities as relates to the economic externalities.
2 We applaud the effort of the team that put
3 together the reports. It does an excellent job in terms
4 of identifying the environmental impacts. It also does a
5 fairly good job in terms of showing the nexus between the
6 environmental impacts and the nexus to the economic and
7 social and cultural impacts as well.

8 However, we're disappointed that in setting forth
9 the mitigative measures that it totally ignores the
10 latter. It totally ignores the indirect impacts. As a
11 community, as you're aware, we're ranked towards the
12 bottom in terms of a number of different economic
13 indicators, but in terms of some of the negative
14 indicators, we rank towards the top.

15 The high-speed rail holds a lot of promise. On
16 the one hand, it can serve as an economic generator. On
17 the other hand, not everybody will enjoy the economic
18 prosperity without proper planning. For example,
19 regardless of which alignment, for the protected
20 communities it would mean that they would have to pay more
21 for rent. It would mean that they may be priced out in
22 terms of buying a home.

23 It means that they would have to travel further
24 to get to and from. That means that as a result of the
25 fallout from the health effects, whatever, they won't have

23

Submission 420 (Baldwin Moy, California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc., September 15, 2011) - Continued

420-1

1 access to healthcare. It means that the cost for food and
2 necessities would increase as well for them. The study
3 acknowledges that the lion's share -- that the
4 disproportional burden is borne by the protected community
5 yet proposes no mitigative measures whatsoever.

6 What to do. There's two things. One is that
7 there needs to be a formulated allocation of the jobs and
8 the subcontracts. And with that there needs to be in
9 place a project labor agreement which sets forth a
10 percentage of the hires and also sets forth set-asides for
11 subcontracts. There also needs to be a mechanism that
12 both monitors and enforces compliance.

13 Secondly, in order for these goals to be
14 effective and sustainable, there needs to be a way of -- a
15 pathway for them to access these job opportunities. For
16 starters there needs to be a pre-apprenticeship program
17 that allows the hard to employ, the unemployed, unskilled
18 access to job opportunities.

19 Secondly, for the long term there should be a
20 planning grant, that we look at establishing a training
21 academy along the lines of the Mineta Transportation
22 Institute of which students and workers can both apply
23 skills and education for purposes of applying for both
24 jobs and for career in the transportation industry.

25 Thank you.

24

Response to Submission 420 (Baldwin Moy, California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc., September 15, 2011)

420-1

See MF-Response-SOCIAL-1, MF-Response-SOCIAL-4, MF-Response-SOCIAL-7 and MF-Response-GENERAL-19. In addition, mitigation measures in Section 3.12.7, Socioeconomics, Communities, and Environmental Justice, includes SO-MM#5. This mitigation measure calls for continued outreach to disproportionately and adversely affected environmental justice communities, regarding the development of training and programs that will allow minority and low-income populations to benefit from the jobs created by the HST project.

Submission 427 (Randy Muhlestein, Azteca Milling, Attorney for, September 15, 2011)

14 MR. MUHLESTEIN: Thank you. I am counsel for
15 Azteca Milling, LL -- a limited liability company. And
16 you've heard from the four Azteca representatives. I
17 promise you I'm the last. I would like to comment a
18 little bit on some of the technical aspects of the
19 Environmental Impact Statement.

21 MR. MUHLESTEIN: Randy Muhlestein, Muhlestein.
22 We -- Azteca Milling company is a big company.
23 They have a hundred employees. Maybe they're worth we
24 guess a hundred million dollars, something like that,
25 process three million bushels of corn every year. They're

33

Submission 427 (Randy Muhlestein, Azteca Milling, Attorney for, September 15, 2011) - Continued

427-1

1 a major company. I doubt that there are very many
2 companies that size that are going to be impacted by any
3 of these alternative routes.
4 We feel like we've been shortchanged in the
5 Environmental Impact Statement. We're not mentioned at
6 all, at least not by name, at least not -- now it's a big
7 stack of documents, 8,000 or -- I don't know, 80 pounds or
8 something and I didn't see us mentioned.
9 I think that also the Environmental Impact
10 Statement is deficient in the sense that it doesn't
11 discuss the benefit to Madera County and the surrounding
12 areas of Azteca Milling's facility or the risks of the
13 expansion, the proposed expansion that the facility --
14 that the A2 route would pose.
15 It does not -- probably most important of all, it
16 does not tell us exactly where the rail is going to go
17 next to our plant. We can't tell whether it's going to
18 have the catastrophic effect, whether it's going to have a
19 critical effect, or just be a bother. We can't really
20 tell. One of the engineers told us that, well, we drew
21 this map like a crayon drawing on a map. So ten feet one
22 way or the other can make a huge difference. We really
23 need to know where it's going to go, and that should be
24 reflected in the Environmental Impact Statement.
25 Also, the Environmental Impact Statement does not

34

427-2

1 give any analysis of the PG&E gas line that goes right --
2 would go right between the railroad and our facility. Gas
3 is a dangerous commodity, and there was a guy killed just
4 five years ago within a quarter mile of the plant when he
5 was ripping -- running a ripper and he hit the gas line.
6 Also, of course, we know about what happened in San Bruno.
7 No discussion at all in the Environmental Impact Statement
8 about the gas.

427-3

9 And then, finally, the capital cost estimate
10 report, I got a copy of that from the authority, and it
11 has numbers and numbers and numbers but it doesn't say
12 anything at all. It just gives one number for the total
13 cost of site work, for the total cost of acquiring real
14 estate for the site work right-of-way land for its
15 improvements. And it says 307 million dollars. That's
16 the number it gives. Just a plain number. It doesn't
17 break any of that out, no detail whatsoever.

18 And, you know, if they take out a hundred million
19 dollar plant, I don't know, does a third of that go to
20 Azteca? Anyway, we think that the Environmental Impact
21 Statement needs to be improved. Now we have written
22 comments. I have nine copies that I can leave with you,
23 and I assume that they will be treated as given.

24 Thank you.

Response to Submission 427 (Randy Muhlestein, Azteca Milling, Attorney for, September 15, 2011)

427-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-8 and MF-Response-SOCIAL-1.

427-2

High-pressure natural gas lines are identified in Section 3.6 Public Utilities and Energy as “high risk” utilities. Not every utility is discussed in detail in the section; however, the Authority and the FRA are aware of the gas and petroleum lines that currently run parallel to the east side of SR 99 (see Figure 3.6-5). The HST footprint would be located east of these existing utilities. The Authority would positively locate public utilities within the potential impact area (by probing, potholing, electronic detection, as-built designs, or to other means) prior to construction, in compliance with state law (i.e., California Government Code 4216). Where it is not possible to avoid utilities, they would be improved (e.g., steel pipe encasement) so that there is no damage to or impairment of the operation of these utilities because of the HST Project. During construction, the potential for accidental disruption of utility systems, including buried utility lines, is low due to the established practices of utility identification. During operation, the likelihood of a catastrophic industrial accident adjacent to the HST alignment is low and hazards from nearby facilities are considered negligible under NEPA and less than significant under CEQA. Please refer to Section 3.6 Public Utilities and Energy and Section 3.11 Safety and Security for more information.

427-3

See MF-Response-SOCIAL-3 and MF-Response-GENERAL-18.

In order to provide a realistic estimate of property values at this phase of design for all alternatives, property acquisition was aggregated by the broad land use categories of residential, commercial and industrial for both rural and urban situations. Each category was then assessed for the study area’s market average and a per acre cost was applied. Added to this estimate were appraisal costs and other fees. An estimate by individual property will not occur until a Record of Decision is signed and the property assessments can be performed.

Submission 441 (Manuel Nevarez, Madera Community Action Network/Madera friends for High-Speed Rail, September 15, 2011)

22 MR. NEVAREZ: Okay. Perfect.
23 Good evening. My name is Manuel Nevarez. I'm
24 the executive director of Madera Community Action Network,
25 also the co-chair for Madera Friends For High-Speed Rail.

62

441-1

1 And, you know, I'm speaking on behalf of the A --
2 specifically the Fresno to Merced portion of the track and
3 the A2 alignment, specifically what we're major proponents
4 of.

5 We've done extensive outreach to the community,
6 and the overwhelming response has been positive after
7 they've heard the facts. There's a lot of information
8 going around that's not factual, and when people actually
9 are confronted with true and factual information, you see
10 that a lot of people are in favor of this project. We've
11 actually collected thousands of comment cards in favor of
12 this project which we will be submitting.

13 And actually something that was very, very
14 interesting is that a lot of the people that are actually
15 on the track that are specifically to the west side,
16 right, that would actually be displaced because of the
17 actual A2 alignment were actually in favor of this, you
18 know, alignment specifically for the fact that most of
19 them are suffering from the fact that they are not
20 having -- you know, they don't have business.

21 And they know that this would be a positive
22 project in all aspects, and they'd be willing to relocate
23 because I mean the upside is just that you can't even
24 compare. They're getting ready to close as opposed to
25 getting an infusion of, you know, jobs and economic

63

Submission 441 (Manuel Nevarez, Madera Community Action Network/Madera friends for
High-Speed Rail, September 15, 2011) - Continued

441-2

1 growth.
2 One thing that we did want to really take into
3 consideration, we want to, you know, appeal to everyone in
4 question is that we encourage that reducing the elevation
5 portion of Madera through Madera County is a very --
6 something that we need to look at. And, you know,
7 high-speed rail needs to work together with Madera because
8 cost is a very important issue that a lot of people have
9 had, you know, and that's something that we feel that
10 needs to be revisited and maybe not going over some of the
11 overpasses that are currently -- that are slated to be
12 bypassed.
13 So that's pretty much it on my behalf. This is a
14 great project. I feel totally blessed and honored to be
15 around to see something groundbreaking like this. I mean
16 the truth is the United States was a country that used to
17 lead the world in this type of stuff, and it's glad to see
18 that people still exist that have vision and can actually
19 see past, you know, minor obstacles. And this is
20 something that's going to put us back on the right track.
21 So thank you guys. Okay.

Response to Submission 441 (Manuel Nevarez, Madera Community Action Network/Madera friends for High-Speed Rail, September 15, 2011)

441-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-9 and MF-Response-GENERAL-10.

441-2

The design team will investigate the possibility of reducing the length of aerial structure through the county during 30% design if the selected alternative is chosen. Reduction in the height of the structure in between highway interchanges and other key areas may be possible, but it would be considered and evaluated during 30% design. It would not be feasible to place the HST tracks at ground level in downtown Madera due to the numerous street crossings. We have studied potential grade separations of downtown Madera streets over a ground level HST and UPRR tracks and determined that traffic circulation would be severely impacted due to the close proximity of major north-south streets, particularly Gateway Drive. Another critical location is the railroad spur track that serves Azteca Milling (at Avenue 18) as well as the Country Club Road crossing. The HST tracks must be aerial at the railroad spur track crossing and a grade separation at Country Club would not be feasible due to the proximity of the SR 99 ramps and Cleveland Avenue intersection. It may be possible for the HST tracks to drop down to ground level south of Olive Avenue however at Avenue 12 there is a floodplain at Cottonwood Creek that would preclude placing the HST tracks at ground level while passing underneath the future Avenue 12 interchange.

Submission 442 (Peter Nunez, Teamsters Local 431, September 15, 2011)

25

MR. NUNEZ: Good afternoon. My name is Peter

64

442-1

1 Nunez. I'm the secretary/treasurer for Teamsters Local
2 431 in Fresno, California, and I appreciate the
3 opportunity to speak to you today and make some comments.

4 We do represent a large number of employers. Our
5 jurisdiction runs from about Chowchilla to the north down
6 to Visalia to the south, so I would speak on behalf of
7 both sections here today. We represent a large group of
8 various employers, and construction is one of them. We've
9 seen the benefits of good projects in the past with Helms
10 Creek and the Courtright project, that that provided good
11 jobs as well as providing great infrastructure to the
12 residents of our communities.

13 So I stand here in favor of this project. I
14 think it would provide the necessary jobs that we all seem
15 to be focused on and concerned with. I do think that
16 there is an ability for this group to reach out to those
17 who may not be in favor of this project and work out those
18 differences and see if there's a way to resolve any of
19 those issues.

20 But I think that this is a twofold benefit. It
21 provides us with the ability to greatly improve our
22 infrastructure, greatly enhance our ability to travel from
23 the north to the south and vice versa, as well as relieve
24 congestion on 99 and hopefully reduce pollution. So
25 quality of life certainly is one of the benefits. But

65

Submission 442 (Peter Nunez, Teamsters Local 431, September 15, 2011) - Continued

442-1

1	again, I believe that jobs are crucial, and I would stand
2	here in favor of that project.
3	Thank you.

Response to Submission 442 (Peter Nunez, Teamsters Local 431, September 15, 2011)

442-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-9.

Submission 424 (Gerardo Oseguera, Azteca Milling, September 15, 2011)

424-1

13 MR. OSEGUERA: My name is Gerardo Oseguera. I'm
14 VP of engineering for Azteca Milling, and I'm going to
15 elaborate a little bit more about what Barry Runyon just
16 mentioned.

17 The proposed route of the high-speed rail will
18 definitely affect our plant. The heart and soul of our
19 process is on the west side of the property which is very,
20 very close to State Highway 99 and the UP railroad track.

21 Depending on the final location, we've met with
22 some engineers and we understand that at this point it's
23 only a conceptual design and the final design will come at
24 a later date. And depending on the final location, the
25 effect on our plant can be either manageable, it can be

28

424-1

1 critical, or it can be catastrophic.

2 The reason why I'm saying manageable is because
3 we know that for sure we're going to lose some corn silo
4 tanks. They can be moved. I mean it's manageable. We
5 don't want it, but to that point we can move them.

6 Could be critical because if we move farther to
7 the east -- if the track goes five foot or ten foot
8 farther to the east than we may think, we're going to have
9 to relocate a lot of our services such as steam boiler,
10 water wells, compressors. It becomes critical. It
11 becomes a big expense. It becomes a very big
12 inconvenience for our facility.

13 I'm calling it catastrophic if it happens to
14 move just five or ten foot more; then it goes into our
15 process. It goes into our corn cooking, into our milling.
16 Then we don't have a plant. We have a very narrow stretch
17 between gas line, railroad track, and our buildings. And
18 at this point not knowing where the track is going to be
19 leaves us very nervous about the current operation and
20 about the future.

21 We've been studying expansion plans for this
22 plant. And this plant is basically our No. 1 option for
23 expanding, but unfortunately with the uncertainty, we're
24 going to have a hard time committing to an expansion here
25 unless we have more clarity on what the plans are.

29

Submission 424 (Gerardo Oseguera, Azteca Milling, September 15, 2011) - Continued

1

Thank you.

Response to Submission 424 (Gerardo Oseguera, Azteca Milling, September 15, 2011)

424-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-10, MF-Response-GENERAL-4, MF-Response-SOCIAL-1, and MF-Response-SOCIAL-3.

Submission 434 (Rick Phillips, Operating Engineers Local 3, September 15, 2011)

434-1

5 MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you. My name is Rick
6 Phillips. I'm with Operating Engineers Local 3.
7 And I'm mainly here to ask you to put some of our
8 people to work. We realize everybody has different
9 opinions on the EIR/EIS. Basically what we would ask you
10 to do is just work together on everything, get it going,
11 get our people to work.
12 I was born here in Madera, and it's really sad to
13 drive through and see the economic depression in this town
14 as it is. I think we need to just get off our tails, get
15 things going. Let's take the proposal, start it right
16 here in Borden, and take off north or south; it doesn't
17 matter. Either way it's going to go. So let's just work
18 together on it and put some people to work and get some
19 money back into our economy.
20 Thank you.

Response to Submission 434 (Rick Phillips, Operating Engineers Local 3, September 15, 2011)

434-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-9 MF-Response-GENERAL-19.

Submission 432 (Ralph Pistorresi, September 15, 2011)

15 MR. PISTORESI: Yes, thank you. Thank you for
16 allowing us to talk here today.
17 With the authority that we have, we're not the
18 high-speed rail authority, "authority" meaning either
19 you're an expert at something or you have such power that
20 it doesn't matter; you do what you want. Or both. I
21 don't know.

24 MR. PISTORESI: Ralph Pistorresi; you stated it.
25 All right. And today I had the unique

42

432-1

1 opportunity to drive a load of grapes from Redtop to
2 Escalon. All right? I get to do that about once a year
3 when there's an emergency crisis. I got to do it today.
4 I spent the morning cussing and praying. Cussing for the
5 condition of the roads and praying that I got to live long
6 enough to come and talk to you here today because the
7 roads are horrible. There's potholes, there's ripples
8 through them. There's no -- at the edge of the road
9 there's no extra pavement. In case the truck should go
10 off, it would go flying into a canal or something.

11 Money has not been spent on roads, which are
12 something that everybody uses. Everybody here uses the
13 roads. And the other important factor is if you're going
14 to spend money, spend it in a place that's going to help
15 the economy. The economy is helped when you help
16 commerce. When you fix the roads, the trucking industry
17 benefits and every other indirect benefit that's a result
18 of transporting goods and services.

19 High-speed rail is not going to transport any
20 goods and services. All they're going to do is move a
21 guested -- guessable amount of people that you hope are
22 going to use it. You have no numbers as to the usage of
23 the thing, how many people -- how much you're going to
24 charge. And if it's like most government projects,
25 whether it be federal, state, or local, they're always --

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Submission 432 (Ralph Pistorosi, September 15, 2011) - Continued

432-1

1 the price is underestimated, it costs three times as much,
2 there's never a need, and they can't afford it.
3 You know, the Bible in Proverbs says that a man
4 is considered wise before he starts to build a house to
5 know that he's got the money to finish it. In this
6 particular case, I think it would behoove us to gain a
7 little bit of wisdom from this proverb and to realize what
8 is this thing costing? Do we really need it? And if we
9 don't need it, we shouldn't be doing it.
10 Ronald Reagan broke the Soviet Union by having
11 them spend too much money for their military, and he broke
12 the whole country. And California being the fifth richest
13 actual like country in the world is going to be broke. If
14 we don't need to spend money, we shouldn't be spending it.
15 Let's spend it on things we know that work.
16 Thank you.

Response to Submission 432 (Ralph Pistoiresi, September 15, 2011)

432-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-6 and MF-Response-GENERAL-14

Submission 412 (Max Rodriguez, Board of Supervisors, Madera County, District 4, September 15, 2011)

24 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Okay. My name is Max Rodriguez.
25 I'm with the Board of Supervisors, Madera County, District

9

PALERMO REPORTING SERVICES 209.577.4451

1 4. I'm speaking for Merced to Fresno. And welcome to
2 Madera. We tried to accommodate you guys with the
3 temperature. It's the low 90s so it's not too bad.
4 Thank you for granting me the time, the
5 opportunity to testify before you this afternoon. My name
6 is Max Rodriguez, and I am a long-time resident of the
7 City of Madera. I have been elected to represent the
8 people of District 4 for the County of Madera. I have
9 served in that capacity since January 2005.

10 I first became involved with the California
11 high-speed rail project in March 2009 after an initial
12 meeting with representatives from the authority followed
13 by a workshop in Madera. I became excited and eager to
14 explore the possibilities of being involved with what
15 could possibly be the largest infrastructure project in
16 the nation.

17 High-speed rail is going to be born in Madera,
18 and I'm happy for that. The rest of the nation will be
19 watching the largest public works project in the history
20 of California take place and, therefore, we cannot afford
21 to lose out on this tremendous opportunity. We have been
22 working diligently here since to promote this project and
23 ensure its success.

24 Madera County stands to benefit the most from
25 this multi-million dollar project. My involvement has

10

PALERMO REPORTING SERVICES 209.577.4451

412-1

Submission 412 (Max Rodriguez, Board of Supervisors, Madera County, District 4, September 15, 2011) - Continued

412-1

1 been driven largely by the economic benefits that this
2 project will bring to Madera County. Most notable is the
3 opportunity to site a heavy maintenance facility in Madera
4 County. Throughout 2009 as chairman of the board, I have
5 walked with the -- I have worked with the private sector
6 and our county staff to find and submit a site that meets
7 authority criteria and would have the least environmental
8 impact.

9 The Gordon-Shaw site meets this criteria. I must
10 emphasize that Madera County offers the best possible
11 location for the heavy maintenance facility. We
12 desperately need jobs. Our local economy is suffering
13 from catastrophic recession. We need jobs now and we need
14 the economic diversifications. We offer and are able and
15 willing to have a willing workforce, and we are accessible
16 to neighboring Merced and Fresno counties.

17 In addition I represent an area that contains
18 both the A1 and the A2 alignment in the City of Madera. I
19 live closest to the A2 alignment of all elected officials,
20 and my constituents are most affected by the A2 alignment.
21 I believe the A2 alignment represents an opportunity to
22 remove the crippling physical, visual, economic blight
23 that affects the E Street corridor in the City of Madera.

24 The blight has affected all of downtown despite
25 millions of dollars of investments and continuing efforts

11

PALERMO REPORTING SERVICES 209.577.4451

412-2

1 by the local redevelopment agency. In fact, without a
2 project of this magnitude of the high-speed rail, it is
3 unlikely that the E Street corridor could ever be
4 developed to the extent needed to positively impact the
5 immediate surroundings in the downtown area.

6 Development of the E Street corridor in
7 conjunction with the high-speed rail project would
8 represent the only realistic opportunity to help our most
9 impoverished community, an opportunity to increase
10 property values and employment opportunities, and to
11 remove the terrible visual blight. This is an opportunity
12 that does not exist today.

13 Finally, the Board of Supervisors after months of
14 testimony and deliberations at length have passed a
15 resolution to support the A2 alignment. The A2 alignment
16 is the least disruptive alignment of all three alignments
17 under consideration and offers the most opportunity. It
18 is the only alignment that remains on this existing
19 transportation corridor throughout Madera County, thereby
20 avoiding unnecessary disruptions to agricultural
21 operations and unnecessary road closures.

22 With some modification to the current design we
23 would save the authority hundreds of millions of dollars
24 while improving overcrossings in Madera County. The A2
25 alignment is a win-win for the high speed rail, the people

12

PALERMO REPORTING SERVICES 209.577.4451

Submission 412 (Max Rodriguez, Board of Supervisors, Madera County, District 4, September 15, 2011) - Continued

412-2 |

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | of Madera County, and the State of California. |
| 2 | Thank you very much. |

Response to Submission 412 (Max Rodriguez, Board of Supervisors, Madera County, District 4, September 15, 2011)

412-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-9, MF-Response-GENERAL-15

412-2

See MF-Response-GENERAL-10

Submission 436 (Jose Rodriguez, Madera Unified School District / Madera Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, September 15, 2011)

22 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon. My name is Jose
23 Rodriguez. I live at 2397 Frederick Way, Madera,
24 California 93637. I am a resident, a small business
25 owner, and a trustee of the Madera Unified School

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436-1

1 District. I'm also vice president of the Madera Hispanic
2 Chamber of Commerce. Madera Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

3 I'm here today to voice out my opinion regarding
4 the A2 alignment regarding the Merced to Fresno segment.
5 And I believe that the A2 alignment is the best direction
6 for our community. Not only does it protect the ag land,
7 but it also aligns with the Madera 2025 Vision which
8 prioritizes the preservation of our ag land and the
9 necessity to eliminate blight with our new development.

10 The A2 alignment will help eliminate blight to
11 the greater Madera area and improve our landscape
12 downtown. It also gives us the best chance to land a
13 heavy maintenance facility which will bring thousands of
14 jobs. We all know that during these harsh economic times,
15 and I'm sure you're all aware it's about 18 to 20 percent
16 of unemployment, that we need jobs. And not only any
17 jobs, but high-paying permanent jobs that can help boost
18 our economy.

19 As a small business owner in the real estate
20 industry, this will not only help my business but also
21 stimulate many others and get our local economy moving to
22 a positive growth. I ask that the community and the
23 council get on board with the high-speed rail A2 alignment
24 and help put Madera in a bright and thriving atmosphere.

25 Thank you.

52

Response to Submission 436 (Jose Rodriguez, Madera Unified School District / Madera Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, September 15, 2011)

436-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-10.

Submission 419 (David Rogers, Madera County Board of Supervisors, September 15, 2011)

10 MR. ROGERS: Thank you for the opportunity to
11 address you today. As you're aware, the Board of
12 Supervisors of Madera County -- I'll give you my name
13 first. David Rogers. I'm supervisor of District 2,
14 Madera County.

15 The Board of Supervisors in Madera County voted
16 to adopt the A2 alignment as our local preferred
17 alternative. In consideration of all of the vital
18 interests in Madera County, the main one, economic being
19 our agricultural base, our agricultural commissioner
20 recently delivered a report which shows us that about 1.3
21 billion dollars in agricultural production this year, this
22 past year. We are in the top one half of one percent in
23 the nation in productive counties, agricultural production
24 in counties. We're in the top 14 in the State of
25 California and in the top 21 in the nation.

20

419-1

419-2

1 Our ancillary businesses all relate to
2 agriculture, and we have a strong position in all of our
3 industry with relating to agriculture. One of those
4 businesses is here today represented, and I'd like to
5 acknowledge them for the vital role they play in our
6 community. That's Azteca Milling.

7 Azteca employs 100 employees. Over 50 farms
8 contribute to their operations. They're a fine company
9 and they've been present in Madera County for many, many
10 years. We consider them a vital interest in this
11 community.

12 The -- I mention all of these things about
13 agriculture and our ancillary business because Madera
14 County has built its future on agriculture and its
15 interests. Everything we are and even have planned for
16 our future to be is agriculture, and so it's vital to us
17 and critical that the EIR and the impacts to agriculture
18 are mitigated, the impacts to our local businesses are
19 mitigated.

20 While it is important that the vital
21 transportation infrastructure must be mitigated and kept
22 intact, as roads -- some roads are going to be closed,
23 others will be kept open and we find ways around --
24 through the system and through mitigated -- mitigating the
25 impacts of those closures through grade separations or

21

Submission 419 (David Rogers, Madera County Board of Supervisors, September 15, 2011) - Continued

419-3

1 overpass or whatever it be, that is important, but I would
2 think the economic considerations are far more overriding.
3 Madera County does not stand to glean any
4 appreciable economic benefits from high-speed rail as you
5 look at the fact that Merced County and Fresno County have
6 stations and we have the passage through of the train. In
7 consideration of all of these things, you realize that we
8 also are a county who is absorbing the greatest impact
9 both economically and mitigation wise.
10 I urge you to please consider, please consider
11 the fact that Madera County is not receiving an economic
12 benefit and that the heavy maintenance facility should be
13 located here. Thank you.

Response to Submission 419 (David Rogers, Madera County Board of Supervisors, September 15, 2011)

419-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-4.

419-2

See MF-Response-TRAFFIC-2.

419-3

See MF-Response-GENERAL-15 and MF-Response-GENERAL-5.

Submission 337 (Arturo Romero, September 15, 2011)



CALIFORNIA
High-Speed Rail Authority

Comment Card
Tarjeta de Comentarios

Merced to Fresno High-Speed Train Section
Draft Environmental Impact Report/
Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) –
Public Hearings
September 2011

Tren de Alta Velocidad Sección Merced a Fresno
Anteproyecto del Informe de Impacto
Medioambiental/Declaración de Impacto
Medioambiental (EIR/EIS) - **Audiencias Públicas**
Septiembre 2011

Please submit your completed comment card at the
end of the meeting, or mail to: Por favor entregue su tarjeta al final de la reunión, o
envíela a una de las siguientes direcciones:

Merced to Fresno HST Environmental Review, 770 L Street, Suite 800, Sacramento, CA 95814

The comment period on the Draft EIR/EIS begins
August 15, 2011 and ends October 13, 2011.
Comments received after **October 13, 2011** will **not**
be addressed in the Final EIR/EIS.

El periodo a hacer comentarios empieza a 15 de
agosto y termina a 13 de octubre. Comentarios
reciben después de **13 de octubre** no se responderá
en el EIR/EIS final.

Name/
Nombre: Arturo Romero

Organization/
Organización: Resident

(Optional/Opcional)
Address/Domicilio: _____

Phone Number/
Número de teléfono: _____

City, State, Zip code/
Ciudad, estado, código postal:
17152 Redco Dr.

Email address/
Correo electrónico: _____

Madera Ca., 93628

337-1

I personally think the High Speed Rail is
great opportunity for the city of Madera to create
jobs for the community throughout these tough times



CALIFORNIA
High-Speed Rail Authority



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Railroad
Administration

Response to Submission 337 (Arturo Romero, September 15, 2011)

337-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-9.

Submission 423 (Barry Runyon, Azteca Milling, September 15, 2011)

423-1

14 MR. RUNYON: Okay. Yes, my name is Barry Runyon,
15 and I want to thank the panel for allowing us to comment.
16 Thank you, David, for acknowledging Azteca Milling.
17 A2 is the option that would affect us. Azteca
18 Milling has been a viable business in the community for
19 over 40 years. Azteca Milling, formerly known as Valley
20 Grain Products, is one of the six plants in the U.S. for
21 Azteca Milling. Azteca Milling plant operates 24/7
22 year-round. The Madera plant distributes corn flour
23 worldwide that is made from the corn grown from local
24 growers. Azteca employs 100 full-time employees with full
25 benefits and makes a contribution to the local Madera

27

423-1

1 economy in many ways.
2 At this time we have a high level of concern
3 because on the A2 option we're in close proximity to the
4 UP rail, and the distance between the rail and our
5 facility leads us to be concerned that under the right of
6 ways that are explained, that they could condemn the
7 plant.
8 Thank you.

Response to Submission 423 (Barry Runyon, Azteca Milling, September 15, 2011)

423-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-10, MF-Response-GENERAL-4, MF-Response-SOCIAL-1, and MF-Response-SOCIAL-3.

Submission 344 (Juan M Urena, September 15, 2011)

Comment Period Extended to
October 13, 2011

El periodo a hacer comentarios
está prolongado hasta del
13 de octubre de 2011



CALIFORNIA
High-Speed Rail Authority

Comment Card
Tarjeta de Comentarios

Merced to Fresno High-Speed Train Section
Draft Environmental Impact Report/
Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) –
Public Hearings
September 2011

Tren de Alta Velocidad Sección Merced a Fresno
Anteproyecto del Informe de Impacto
Medioambiental/Declaración de Impacto
Medioambiental (EIR/EIS) - Audiencias Públicas
Septiembre 2011

Please submit your completed comment card at the
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Por favor entregue su tarjeta al final de la reunión, o
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Merced to Fresno HST Environmental Review, 770 L Street, Suite 800, Sacramento, CA 95814

The comment period on the Draft EIR/EIS begins
August 15, 2011 and ends September 28, 2011.
Comments received after 5:00 p.m. on September
28, 2011 will not be addressed in the Final EIR/EIS.

El periodo a hacer comentarios empieza a 15 de
agosto y termina a 28 de septiembre. Comentarios
reciben después de 5:00 p.m. a 28 de septiembre
no se responderá en el EIR/EIS final.

Name/
Nombre: Juan M Urena

Organization/
Organización:

(Optional/Opcional) 17654 Rd 27
Address/Domicilio:

Phone Number/
Número de teléfono: 559-995-5071

City, State, Zip code/
Ciudad, estado, código postal: Madera CA 93638

Email address/
Correo electrónico:

344-1

I have a good spot for a station on rd 27
north of rd 17 I could sell you part of my land
BRSE is better sit for the high speed rail
you can bypass modern city then you would
save lots of money and headache also you don't
have to deal with the grain company south of town
If you can use my land I would like
to sell some of it, or all It would be a good
investment go A1

Response to Submission 344 (Juan M Urena, September 15, 2011)

344-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-2 and MF-Response-GENERAL-10.

Submission 437 (Steve Weil, September 15, 2011)

437-1

3 MR. WEIL: My name is Steve Weil. I'm here
4 representing myself and Horizon Enterprises. I'm a
5 property owner on the A2 alignment. I am opposed to the
6 A2 alignment. We have about 2,000 linear feet of property
7 impacted by the A2 alignment which includes 51 acres of
8 commercially designated land.

9 Basically the City of Madera -- City of Madera
10 provided the authority with a list of major projects. One
11 of them was a large retail center at Avenue 17 and Freeway
12 99. The EIR fails to -- the EIR fails to discuss that
13 project with any level of detail. For example, the EIR
14 fails to note that that project includes a FEMA-approved
15 floodplain, floodplain engineering project that has been
16 fully designed and funded and approved by FEMA. It's a
17 floodplain project.

18 It's a part of a major project called Madera Town
19 Center which is located at Avenue 17 and 99 on land that
20 has been rezoned and designated by the City of Madera for
21 retail development. It was fully approved by FEMA and has
22 a two million dollar funding that's held in a trust
23 account for that purpose. It would remove 50 acres from
24 the existing floodplain. It was not discussed in the EIR.

25 In addition, that project provided a wetlands

53

437-1

1 delineation report. The wetland studies in the EIR
2 consist almost entirely of aerial photo -- aerial
3 satellite images. There are no on-the-ground -- virtually
4 no on-the-ground delineations.

5 The project I'm talking about at Avenue 17 and
6 Freeway 99, if they had asked the city, they would have
7 had available to them the wetlands delineation report
8 which was confirmed and verified by the Army Corps of
9 Engineers which located -- which identified that there
10 were six acres of jurisdictional wetlands that's crossing
11 the A2 alignment.

12 In addition, they would have also found out that
13 Schmidt Creek has been determined by the Army Corps of
14 Engineers to be a jurisdictional body of water. Schmidt
15 Creek was not mentioned or listed in the jurisdictional
16 items that were in the wetlands section of the EIR or in
17 the jurisdictional waters. Schmidt Creek was missing from
18 the EIR and should be discussed because it is a recognized
19 jurisdictional water by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

20 The economic impact of running an aerial
21 structure on Freeway 99 removes a mile of freeway
22 visibility from 200 acres of commercial property that are
23 designated in the Madera General Plan for commercial
24 development. Those commercial properties would then have
25 to be relocated and replaced by another 200 acres of the

54

437-2

Submission 437 (Steve Weil, September 15, 2011) - Continued

437-2

1 property which represents almost half of the future
2 commercial growth within the entire City of Madera in the
3 recently adopted General Plan.

4 So you have a 200-acre hold in the General Plan
5 for the commercial development that has to be relocated..
6 The EIR must discuss as a collateral effect of the project
7 the environmental impacts of relocating 200 acres of
8 designated commercial development from the freeway
9 corridor to another location in Madera.

437-3

10 CEQA guidelines -- oh, yeah. CEQA guidelines
11 require that the alternatives that the -- CEQA guidelines
12 require that there be a detailed discussion in the EIR or
13 EIS of the decision-making process that constituted what
14 is normally called the scoping process, which in this case
15 was called the alternative analysis process.

16 In this particular case there were -- there was a
17 preliminary alternatives analysis document that included
18 two design options that were called Design Option 4 and
19 Design Option 6 that provided for alternative crossing to
20 the San Joaquin River fore the A1 alignment. Design
21 options 4 and 6 --

23

MR. WEIL: Well, I'm a property owner. I think I

24

should have the right -- these are very important matters.

Submission 437 (Steve Weil, September 15, 2011) - Continued

3 MR. WEIL: I'll complete my sentence.
4 Design Option 4 and Design Option 6 were
5 completely eliminated, not discussed whatsoever in the
6 EIR/EIS. They must be discussed. And the manner in which
7 they were dropped from consideration must be carefully
8 identified and discussed; otherwise, you're violating a
9 requirement under CEQA to discuss the preliminary
10 alternatives analysis process.
11 Thank you.

Response to Submission 437 (Steve Weil, September 15, 2011)

437-1

The commenter describes the City of Madera's investment in preparing detailed floodplain and wetland studies for the property in northern Madera, and subsequent approval by FEMA of floodplain and channel modifications associated with Schmidt Creek. Selection of the UPRR/SR 99 Alternative could result in substantial reconfiguration of the approve land use and need to redo floodplain and wetland studies. The cost of replacement environmental studies and engineering for floodplain and wetland permits could be discussed as part of the right-of-way acquisition process as the value of those investments and approvals may be considered part of the fair market value of the property.

437-2

See MF-Response-LAND USE-3, MF-Response-LAND USE-4 and MF-Response-SOCIAL-3.

437-3

Consistant to CEQA and NEPA, the EIR/EIS identifies, references, and summarizes the Alternatives Analyses undertaken in the process of selecting the three build-alternatives for analysis. The full Alternatives Analyses themselves are not required to be part of the CEQA or NEPA document. See MF-Response-GENERAL-2.

Submission 444 (Steve Weil, September 15, 2011)

23 MR. WEIL: Yeah, Steve Weil here representing
24 myself and Horizon Enterprises. I want to reiterate real
25 quick on the issue of the design options. Basically what

68

444-1

1 happened was that in the preliminary -- in the preliminary
2 alternatives analysis there were multiple design options
3 associated with the A1 alignment, several just south of
4 Merced and three different design options relating to the
5 crossing of the San Joaquin River.

6 What happened was essentially the Design Options
7 4 and 6 were dropped from consideration -- from further
8 analysis and consideration at that point and there was
9 no -- there was virtually no explanation in the document
10 for why they were dropped. In essence, the only comment
11 was in a chart somewhere in the preliminary alternatives
12 analysis document. There was a chart that indicated that
13 the Design Options 4 and 6 were dropped because they went
14 through urbanized land and because they were opposed by
15 officials of the City of Fresno.

16 Well, the fact is that I just drove there earlier
17 today as I came up from Fresno. The alignment locations,
18 you know, north of Bullard that represented Design Option
19 4 and 6 are all vacant land. And the only reason the City
20 of Fresno officials might oppose it is there's a major
21 proposed Target retail shopping center that would be
22 impacted.

23 So essentially what we're doing is basically
24 trading off trying to minimize ag impacts in south Madera
25 County because by shifting the alignment at the San

69

Submission 444 (Steve Weil, September 15, 2011) - Continued

444-1

1 Joaquin River, you basically significantly reduce --
2 significantly reduce ag impacts in south Madera County
3 because you're closer to the BNSF alignment. So you
4 reduce ag impacts in south Madera County and you have to
5 traverse part of Fresno; however, opposition from Fresno
6 officials apparently caused that to be dropped. I think
7 it should be placed back in the EIR, fully analyzed and
8 discussed, and there should be recirculation to allow
9 comment on that.

444-2

10 The other issue I'd like to bring up is the issue
11 of independent utility. The project requires independent
12 utility based on the funding procedures by the Federal
13 Government. Federal -- the Department of Transportation
14 funding for the project requires independent utility, and
15 there have been numerous statements by High-Speed Rail
16 Authority, even the director himself, stating very clearly
17 that the method of achieving independent utility was going
18 to be utilization of the track system by existing
19 passenger service. And the only existing passenger
20 service that could qualify for that is Amtrak service.

21 However, the EIR fails completely to even mention
22 this. The operational sections of the EIR don't bring
23 this up. The system objective and design sections don't
24 bring it up, and there's no analysis of diesel locomotive
25 service on the track system with respect to air quality,

70

444-2

1 noise and vibration, and other impacts. This has to be
2 included in the EIR. It has to be analyzed and
3 recirculated.

444-3

4 The final issue is that the train station design
5 in Fresno has no consideration whatsoever for car rental
6 facilities and car rental maintenance facilities. There
7 are hundreds of -- you know, lots of car rental facilities
8 in Fresno air terminal which is a comparable volume of
9 traffic. They occupy almost a ten-acre area, and there's
10 no provision in the station analysis, design objectives or
11 analysis, or environmental impacts for car rental
12 facilities and car rental maintenance facilities. So in
13 the station in Fresno and including the station in Merced.
14 So that is lacking; it has to be included. The EIR should
15 include that, and the document needs to be recirculated
16 based on all of my comments.

17 Thank you.

Response to Submission 444 (Steve Weil, September 15, 2011)

444-1

Consistent to CEQA and NEPA, the EIR/EIS identifies, references, and summarizes the Alternatives Analyses undertaken in the process of selecting the three build-alternatives for analysis. The full Alternatives Analyses themselves are not required to be part of the CEQA or NEPA document. See MF-Response-GENERAL-2.

444-2

See MF-Response-GENERAL-13. Independent utility for the project is different than ARRA funding awarded for Initial Construction Segment ("ICS") in the Central Valley. The independent utility for the project is Merced to Fresno as evaluated in the EIR/EIS. The Authority and FRA acknowledge comments regarding the "independent utility" condition of the ARRA funding awarded for ICS in the Central Valley. Essentially, this condition required the Authority to plan how it would utilize the ARRA funding to site and construct track that would have utility in the event additional HSR funding is never secured. Independent utility under ARRA would be achieved by allowing non-electrified passenger trains to utilize the ICS. The ICS track would be vastly superior to existing passenger train track in the same corridor, thus allowing much faster and smoother service than currently exists. Such service is undefined at present but could range from the existing Amtrak San Joaquin service (although improved because of the improved track) to modern diesel multiple unit trains capable of speeds and comfort significantly better than the existing Amtrak San Joaquin service.

The ARRA grant agreement with the FRA (in attachment 3A, page 4) specifically states that such service would not be funded by Proposition 1A or run by the Authority. Proposition 1A would not fund the capital costs to facilitate such service to utilize the ICS (i.e., connector track to connect the ICS to the existing BNSF mainline, plus associated positive train control (PTC) and interim station capital costs); these would be 100 percent federal funds. The Authority would not perform or contract for the construction. In short, therefore, improved non-electrified passenger service utilizing the ICS is not part of the Project (i.e., a high-speed electrified train project) for environmental review purposes; environmental review would be conducted by those agency(ies) that would institute and operate such service. Nevertheless, potential environmental impacts of construction that would permit such service were fully analyzed in the DEIR/EIS.

444-3

The traffic analysis for the station areas included passengers utilizing rental cars that would arrive from an off-site location. However, the Authority will not be building rental car facilities as part of the HST project. The Authority is working with local jurisdictions to help plan for appropriate station area amenities and services, which could include rental car facilities, but such facilities would be pursued and implemented by local jurisdictions.